

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS



ED QUATREVAUX
INSPECTOR GENERAL

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MEDIA CONTACT:
Paula Pendarvis
(504) 717-7591

OIG RECOMMENDS IMPROVED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR CITY LAW DEPARTMENT

The New Orleans Office of Inspector General (OIG) today released a report titled [“Law Department Funding”](#) as part of its series of reports analyzing the funding of the justice agencies.

Evaluators estimated an annual cost to taxpayers of \$1.5 million per year to fund the Law Department’s role in the New Orleans justice system. The project examined Law Department revenues and expenditures from 2008 through 2013. The OIG focused on costs associated with the defense of the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) and its officers in civil cases, litigation activities stemming from the federal consent decrees with the OPSO and NOPD, the prosecutorial function in Traffic and Municipal Courts, and how the Law Department allocated resources to achieve justice system-related performance goals.

The OIG concluded that the Law Department’s data management systems were incapable of producing basic information such as attorney prosecution rates, the amount the City owed in legal claims, and litigation attorney workloads. The report showed the Law Department used revenue from judgments as a performance measure for prosecuting attorneys, a practice inconsistent with American Bar Association standards. Evaluators also found the policy allowing prosecuting attorneys to maintain outside legal employment created the potential for conflict of interest and low-quality work.

The OIG recommended that the Law Department improve its data management processes to benefit efficiency in its operations and its ability to report on its workload and performance. The OIG also recommended that litigation attorneys track their time and that the Law Department prohibit outside legal employment for prosecutors.

“We are pleased that the City Attorney has committed to securing a new data management system because better information should lead to greater efficiency and better justice outcomes,” stated Inspector General Ed Quatrevaux. “However, the City should change its practice of permitting part-time attorneys in Municipal and Traffic Courts to have outside legal employment; the practice presents serious concerns about conflict of interest and poor performance.”

In addition to its report, the OIG issued a [brief](#) summarizing the report and its findings.

OIG reports can be viewed on its website nolaoig.gov.

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